



MENUNKATUCK AUDUBON SOCIETY
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February 24, 2022

Environment Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: HB 5140

Menunkatuck Audubon Society supports HB 5140 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE HAND-HARVESTING OF HORSESHOE CRABS IN THE STATE.

Red Knots (*Calidris canutus rufa*) are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Knots depend on the eggs of horseshoe crabs as an important food source on their 9300 mile trip from the southern tip of South America to their breeding grounds in the central Canadian Arctic. Red Knot populations in the U.S. were decimated in the 1800s by commercial hunting for sport and food. Knot hunting in the U.S. ended with passage of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act in 1918, and historical writings show the birds largely recovered. But in the 20th century, coastal development and over-harvest of the horseshoe crab took a toll. Since about 2000 the Red Knot population passing through Delaware Bay in spring has declined 70-75%.

While the Connecticut shore is not a significant stopover for Red Knots, some do visit our beaches. Furthermore, a healthy horseshoe crab population in Connecticut benefits the entire population.

Menunkatuck urges the Environment Committee favorably report out HB 5140.

Sincerely,

Dennis Riordan
President